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INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE URBAN DISTRICT FOR THE YEAR 1941.

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MARKET DRAYTON.

The exigencies of War Conditions again necessitate your Annual Report being presented in an abridged form. Despite the presence of a sharp out-break of measles in the early part of the Year the general health of the District has been good. The high standard of hygiene, as reflected in the absence of other zymotic diseases, has been maintained.

The transitional period in which Orders of the Ministry of Health were introduced to meet emergency conditions appears to have passed and stabilisation under the new conditions has been achieved, in the main. Nevertheless, from time to time the Ministry has found it necessary to direct attention to problems which may arise, chiefly on account of overcrowding and local congestion associated with persons - newcomers to the District. In this category may be grouped the Typhus and Scabies Orders and directions for dealing with lice. The incoming persons are, in many instances, of uncertain origin and it is with the utmost difficulty that their rehousing is controlled.

In connection with the rationing Scheme for food, it has been found necessary to make certain extensions. These grants have been made to meet the requirements of invalids and concern chiefly eggs and milk.

During the course of the year opportunity was given to Health Officers to gain instruction in measures to be taken to deal with Gas Contamination of Foodstuffs and the steps to be taken locally to

protect the inhabitants in this connection. Again, through the Regional Medical Officer, foodstuffs likely to apread disease through contamination have been noted and warning given where necessary.

Attention was drawn to the necessity for making adequate provision for expectant mothers in local hospitals and institutions and where required the accommodation has been improved and extended. Medical Practitioners have been kept informed of any changes, recommendations and improvements with a view to securing the utmost cooperation. During the course of the summer the women of the Town and District had the opportunity of meeting Sir Drummond Shields in the Town Hall where an instructive lecture on aspects of biology and associated disease was delivered.

POPULATION. The original controlled evacuation has by now almost completely ceased to function. A few ~~scattered~~ remnants remain scattered over the Town but the major part of the available housing is now taken over by persons who have moved voluntarily. Shopping continues to attract residents in the surrounding countryside but the market, held in the open weekly, shows a distinct fall in revenue. With so many foodstuffs controlled and such others as are available able to be disposed of easily and without the need for display, a reason for this lessening of trade may be adduced. Town opinion did not support certain structural alterations which were contemplated and which had roots in this weekly fair and it will remain to be seen if this survival of old English custom will be able to be revived with the return of more normal times.

To such military personnel as make the Town their centre, hospitality is extended in the form of canteens and organised amusements and there is adequate provision for entertainments in the cinemas and concerts arranged. Recreations - cricket, golf and bathing - afford excellent opportunity to the athletic.

LABORATORY SERVICE. The pathological and bacteriological connection with the University of Birmingham has been severed with the opening of the new Donaldson-Hudson Laboratories. These have been constructed as an annexe to the Royal Salop Infirmary in Shrewsbury. Another connection, that of the Emergency Laboratory at Wellington, has been broken. It has been found necessary to change these headquarters to Hereford. The full effects of this latter move have not, as yet, been fully felt as there has been little call for laboratory help in the past year.

AMBULANCE. The contract for removal of patients suffering from infectious diseases has been varied during the year when another carriage hirer took over this work. Again this change of scheme has not been tested in full.

SHELTERS. In certain instances alterations have to be made to improve facilities and to secure greater comfort and security for the users. The shelter behind Jones' Garage has to be strengthened by replacing wood and galvanised-iron by concrete. With the same object the Town-hall shelter has to be reduced in size and accommodation and greater facility for exit provided. Shelters are inspected regularly and, in every instance where an alert has been sounded, the buildings are subjected to disinfection by spraying.

SWIMMING BATHS. These continue to be so well patronised that, to meet the increased demand and to place the system on a sounder hygienic basis, the introduction of an automatic chlorination plant is in contemplation.

WATER SUPPLY. This continues to be under the direction of the local Water Company. Samples taken for analyses have proved to be satisfactory and to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Health, a system of chlorination has been installed during the course of the year. To secure regulation of this added protection tests will be made at short regular intervals by the Sanitary Inspector.

SCAVENGING. The district continues to be served by one horse-drawn vehicle, and at times additional help has been required. A weekly service is aimed at throughout the year. Associated with this, the calls for salvage collection have made large demands on the labour and vehicles available. It might be thought necessary to have a fortnightly collection during the summer period.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL AND DRAINAGE. Any complaints of defective sanitation have again come chiefly from the Bentley's Road and the Buntingsdale Road district and these have been dealt with as the present conditions will permit. The sewage works were inspected in June by a deputation from the Council when the disposal of sludge, always a difficult problem, was discussed. Avenues to improve removal were investigated and the following possible means were considered :- seeking by advertisement to obtain a contract, disposal on land on a broader basis, removal to refuse tip.

It was noted at the time of the inspection that the disposal plant was functioning satisfactorily.

During the year improvements have been carried out to deal with drainage problems and storm water flow. In this connection relief work has been completed on the sewers connecting Stafford Street to Cheshire Street, Frogmore Road to Cheshire Street and Stafford Street to Great Hales Street.

HOUSING. A large number of the old properties in the Town have been inspected and in the case of Council Property, every home has been visited. Repairs and reconditioning have been carried out where possible. While conditions as to overcrowding have been not entirely satisfactory no case meriting particular attention has been brought to notice. Inspections for cleanliness have been made and in one instance it was found necessary to take action to relieve tenants from an infestation of bugs. The less drastic measures used saved the need for recourse to cyanide fumigation.

The local lodging houses have been visited periodically and found to be well conducted.

Local itinerant dwellers (in caravans) were the subject of investigation as to their means of sanitation, and the Sanitary Inspector reported favourably on conditions found.

MEAT AND FOOD. The system of meat delivery to the District has been continued. From time to time the state of particular foodstuffs has been reported on and in certain cases the articles in question have been condemned and confiscated. The local shopkeepers have given their co-operation and have facilitated this work.

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MILK AND DAIRIES. The local cowsheds have had regular inspections and the Sanitary Inspector reports as to their satisfactory condition.

FACTORIES. These have been inspected as required under the Act.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. As in 1940 the variety of notifiable illness brought to notice was limited but, nevertheless, a sharp epidemic of measles was experienced which compensated for any lack of this variety. The onset of this attack occurred early in the first quarter, reached its maximum and also waned in the second and by mid-summer the District was practically free again. Some 200 cases were officially notified in the six months. There was no return of the disease in the autumn.

Whooping cough was also present early in the year. However, there were few cases (4) limited to the first half.

Diphtheria gave rise to one case, not immunised, and this was nursed in the hospital. There was a great diminution in the frequency of Scarlet Fever. During 1940 there had been a rise in prevalence but, happily, in this year, only two cases were notified. One was treated in hospital.

One case of cerebro-spinal fever - a disease usually associated with war conditions - occurred in the second quarter.

One case of pneumonia was recorded in the last quarter.

The Tuberculosis Register shows a slight rise on the previous year :-

	MALES.		FEMALES.	
	Pulmonary.	Non-Pulmonary.	Pulmonary.	Non-pulmonary.
1940.	8.	9.	4.	5.
1941.	10.	10.	5.	6.

When the increased population of the District is considered, the above may be taken as a maintainance of the average and should be expected to right itself on the return to normal conditions. The possibility of an increase in contageous skin disease forecast in the Report for 1940 has been experienced in the form of scabies. This disease has been fairly wide-spread in the Area, ~~INFECTIOUS DISEASE~~ - in association with the Country generally. Home and clinic treatment has been used but difficulty has been experienced in stamping out the disease in the homes attacked. To secure complete freedom in a household it is necessary to consider every member and, too often, the elders cannot be reached with ease. The County Authority has made some provision to deal with a section of the Community - those evacuated into the Area - and when accommodation is available the Local Institution and Shawbury Casual Wards have been used. Unfortunately, scabies can also attack local residents and these have to depend on any facilities offered by the Local Authority. It is hoped that early in 1942 a limited provision will be available, working in conjunction with the other Authorities in the North-Eastern Area, and patients will be able to be received at a clinic.

The campaign against diphtheria, instituted in 1937, has progressed favourably where school-children are concerned and an analysis made at the end of the Year showed that 70% had been treated. This may be improved on but the present figure may be taken as very satisfactory. For the under-fives a much smaller total 10% has been assessed as treated. From the work done this result would seem to be too low and, in all probability, by adjustment by considering other

factors this return could be improved and the higher ratio obtained would more adequately represent the present position. Nevertheless, it would seem that the pre-school child still requires attention in much greater degree to secure something approaching wholesale protection.

With the limitation of soap by rationing careful handling will be necessary to guard against dirt-borne disease. The full effects of this rationing are, in all probability, not yet being experienced on account of the reserve supplies accumulated by the householders still being in use. When these become exhausted so will the scarcity be felt. It may be necessary to consider publicly advising the Town the steps which should be taken to economise to meet this limitation.

W. A. M. STEWART.

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